

# RGGI is the Law in Virginia



*In 2020, the Virginia General Assembly passed the Clean Energy and Community Flood Preparedness Act (HB 981/SB 1027). The law requires Virginia to participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI, pronounced Reggie) which is a successful pollution reduction program that drives utilities and power generators toward cleaner, more sustainable and less damaging energy solutions. This is accomplished through a regional market-based approach that reduces carbon dioxide emissions year by year and requires fossil fuel power plants to pay for each ton of their pollution.*

## RGGI is working.

RGGI formed in 2005 and Virginia's participation in the program began in 2021. The program is working — power plants are polluting less and critical financial resources are being generated to address climate change. Specifically:

### Combat climate change

Before RGGI, Virginia's emissions weren't going down.<sup>1</sup> After two years in RGGI, Virginia power plant emissions have fallen 16.8% statewide according to the EPA.<sup>2</sup>

### Reduce overall electricity rates over time

Volatile fossil fuel prices are the real driver behind high utility bills, and RGGI will continue to help protect Virginians from these high costs by reducing Virginia's reliance on fossil fuels. In fact, the states that have participated in RGGI since the beginning have seen their electricity prices drop by almost 6% while they went up by almost 9% throughout the rest of the country.<sup>3</sup>

**“Our heat bill was so high, it was astronomical. With the heat pump, and with the insulation, it's cut it down quite a bit. With cold weather, you should do what we did. It helps reduce the juice bill, keeps the cold air out: you don't have drafts in the house. It's done wonders.”**

— LISA COLLINS, BLACKSBURG RESIDENT



Blacksburg, Virginia residents Lisa and Bert Collins love their new roof and the other efficiency upgrades they made to their home thanks to Virginia's participation in the RGGI program. (Photographer: Stephanie Gross)

### Improve public health and equity

Virginia's participation in RGGI has generated more than \$730 million in critical funding to support low-income energy efficiency programs and flood resilience infrastructure in the Commonwealth.

- Energy efficiency upgrades are the best way to lower electricity bills, and Virginia's funds are directed to helping those households most in need. A 2023 study showed that through 2030, RGGI funds would facilitate the upgrade of 130,000 homes in Virginia, saving low-income households about \$676 per year on utility bills, while creating 2,100 jobs for local communities.<sup>4</sup>
- Virginia's participation in RGGI is the only consistent state funding for localities to perform resiliency work. 98 projects have already been approved, totaling nearly \$100 million, helping coastal and inland communities all across the Commonwealth. This work is just getting started and maintaining RGGI's consistent funding is critical to Virginia's resilient future.

## Results that matter

RGGI is helping combat climate change and improve the lives of everyone.



↓  
decrease in  
emissions



↗  
funding  
generated



↘  
electricity  
prices drop  
over time

In just two years, Virginia **power plant emissions have fallen 16.8%** statewide, and RGGI has **generated more than \$730 million in funding** to support low-income energy efficiency programs and flood resilience infrastructure in the Commonwealth.

States that have participated in RGGI have seen their **electricity prices drop by almost 6%** while they went up by almost 9% throughout the rest of the country.

## RGGI is law.

The Youngkin Administration is attempting to remove Virginia from RGGI via the Air Pollution Control Board. Since RGGI is law, the Governor's attempt to use administrative action to undo the law is not legal and is currently subject to a legal challenge. Sixty-four members of the General Assembly filed an official

comment to the Air Pollution Control Board in March 2023 expressing their position that participation in RGGI is mandated by law. While this unlawful action is decided in court, the General Assembly should make no changes to the Clean Energy and Community Flood Preparedness Act.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eenews.net/articles/coal-plants-disappear-in-va-but-co2-is-rising/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://campd.epa.gov/data/custom-data-download?bookmarkId=1048>

<sup>3</sup> [https://acadiacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Acadia-Center\\_RGGI\\_10-Years-in-Review\\_2019-09-17.pdf](https://acadiacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Acadia-Center_RGGI_10-Years-in-Review_2019-09-17.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://rampages.us/wilderresearch/wp-content/uploads/sites/37363/2023/01/Pitt-et-al.-2023-Analysis-of-the-Impacts-of-RGGI-and-the-HIEE-Program-1.pdf>



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